IN THE CHILDREN'S COURT.

Where Section 675 of the Penal Code Is Daily Overworked.

It isn't all cakes and ale for the children of the East Side, even though enterprising editors sometimes send them to the Metropolitan Museum to get their impressionable views of impressionistic painting, or to the circus to see if, like the folks in Jersey, they can keep their eyes on three rings and four platforms at the same time.

If one disproves this statement, if one still has lingering beliefs that childhood is the time of irresponsibility and joy that into its few years are crowded all the freedom, the well-being, laughter and jest, let him go to the Children's Court in East Eleventh street, where is held the Special Sessions in which childhood takes on a phase unknown, perhaps, to the holders of such theories

Monday morning is a great day over in that neighborhood. Even washing-day skies and laundry agreements do not possess the interest that they have in other localities. If one has not a boy of one's own in trouble before the Judge, there is always a neighbor's boy and the neighbor needs sustaining, so at an early hour mothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, friends, escorted sometimes or followed by masculine contingents, convene there.


THE FAILURE OF "COME SEVEN, COME ELEVEN."

There are other days when the court holds session, but the first day of the week brings most of the derelicts, for Saturday afternoon and Sunday are the times when the small boy is at his worst.

So at an early hour the place is filled—filled to overflowing, and unless one has personal methods of suasion, it is difficult to gain admission.

Here are gathered a queer pot pourri of types. Well-groomed men, some of them counsel for the prisoners, some representing the many charitable societies which keep watch and ward over their charges, young lawyers trying their initial cases, officers of the court in blue uniforms and stealthy steps who have caught the young Dick Turpins red-handed and are there to explain their unwonted activity.


CONVICTED.

There is an unending procession of shabby boys, toes out of their stockingless shoes, and elbows out of their sleeves, as if seeking to get a sight of the toes; they are shock headed or close cropped, timid or callous, as the case may be. A few curiosity-led women in gay attire form the foreground of the picture presided over by the Judge, who, in classic gown and most unclassic mildness of demeanor, presides.

It is a most effective picture. In the background, no less effective, are the dwellers in The Other Half, some of them there as witnesses for or against, some of them in parental severity or parental tears, wet-eyed women wiping their faces furtively on soiled rags or their sleeves, bearded men collarless, cuffless, stolidly looking on while their progeny are convicted or released, apparently incapable of emotion at either result; visitors grave and gay, visitors indifferent or pleased at the unusual commotion coming into their quiet lives; some who suggest the Tolstoi types. Anarchists, dwellers in Syria, or in the uttermost parts of the earth, all are represented there, in this unique court, the mere existence of which is unknown to the One Half of the world.

Within the terra cotta walls, while outside is the unending clamor of the street cars and the street traffic, broken by the occasional silver chiming of a bell, go on unceasingly, miniature tragedies of life, the actors in them so tiny, so pathetic, or so humorous, that one hesitates continually between the smile and tear. As that shibboleth of the law, "incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial," comes now and then from lips of judge or attorney, one questions if it does not better apply to the prisoners—the defendants, as they are grandiloquently called—than it does to the testimony which it is supposed to describe.

Black lettered briefs, yellow cards on which are to be inscribed certain information, contain the phrase "In the Children's Part." It is the children's part in the great world of crime which here engages and engrosses the attention of every looker-on, no matter how trivial may have been the impelling motive bringing him.

These are the future dwellers in prisons, the future criminals of the country, the soon-to-be residents of houses of refuge, juvenile protectories. The first step and the one which counts is taken here.

Perhaps some of the small defendants are to be respected citizens. Who can tell? If they are not, it will not be because Charity has refused to cover the multitude of their sins or because the law has proved cold instead of kind.

Every phase of degeneracy is depicted on these infantile faces—for it must be remembered that only children under 16 are tried in this court, and the ages in the majority of cases are between 8 and 10. Here are the types of which Nordau and Lombroso have written so eloquently. In the tapering heads, the protruding lips and chins, the weak lines already forming about the face, the scars of conflicts, the battered legs and arms, the furtive, shifting glances, the ready lies on trembling lips, the *esprit de corps* between the small criminals, one reads too clearly the end. There are times when one questions the possible good of leniency—until one hears the sobbing of the mothers. Then one questions no longer, one is only grateful for the kindness shown, for the elastic benefits of the law stretched to their fullest extent.

It is for the petty offenders one feels the greatest sympathy, those who have only committed boyish depredations, which in another class and another environment would be treated with laughter—not the law, those who are herded in with these doomed already to social destruction.

These latter are the workers out—the workers out of the sins of the fathers.


THE GANG OF BURGLARS.

These are they of the third and fourth generation.

Occasionally the suave, smooth tones of Justice Olmsted, as he leans forward toward the small prisoner twisting his cap—they all twist their caps—break the silence of momentary interest. "Do you know what a sin is?" In the chalky pallor of the mother's face as she, too, leans forward to hear her son's answer, one knows that he realizes what a sin is, that he realized it before he was born—that it was his one and only inheritance.

At a recent Monday session in the Childrens' Court, fashion, unexpected, invaded.

"'Taint often we get automobile cases," said a court official, "One roller skate's usually the limit of the people that come here."

"Sometimes they 'ave three skates on," corrected another of the officers, softly.

The automobile case in question engrossed the attention of the Court for about half an hour.

The defendant was a boy about fourteen. He looked older. Casually one would have classified him as eighteen. He had the assured air of a man of the world; he had been arrested for driving his machine beyond the speed designated by the law, and he looked, in his long tan coat, his perfectly fitting clothes, his supple, well-knit frame, like one of Sargent's portraits.

He was very much bored, as bored as any one could be who had experienced everything that life leaves to a man of his age. He was bored, but well bred, and tried to disguise from the Justice his real feeling, that he thought the proceedings unnecessarily lengthy and time wasting for one of his class. He looked at the blue strip of sky through the window back of the Justice's chair, at the court officials, at his father, hovering in the background with a continuous smile of comradeship on his face, at the flotsam and jetsam of life, which meant nothing to him, and probably never would, and then explained courteously his experience and information in regard to "accelerators" and other technicalities of the automobilist's life. He smiled grayly when his father paid the gold piece, his fine, to the official, as if he faintly resented the Court getting the better of him, as a representative of a class with which justice should not hob-nob. Then he followed his parent and his counsel, more bored than ever.

Surely he represents the type which our English cousins say do not exist—American children.

In sharp contrast with him was a small boy with trousers turned up in true Anglomania style. This, however, was the only thing about him which suggested the "Johnny" type. He was undersized, pale, anæmic, as most of the prisoners are. He was "out on parole," but was under suspicion of being present when certain articles belonging to another person mysteriously disappeared.

The Justice questioned quickly. "You live in such and such a place and were going home by way of such and such a street? Don't you know that is not the nearest way home?" Then, as a possible reminiscence of the time when he found that the longest way round is the shortest way home he smiled understandingly and did not further pursue the investigation.

"Fat pocket books and chatelaine bags seem to be your trouble," the Justice explained to the small prisoner. "If I were you I'd keep away from their neighborhood."

The women in the audience, particularly those of the well-dressed class, smiled appreciatively. Apparently they had troubles of that kind themselves. There were many in the back of the room who were not so troubled and the Judge's admonition fell on barren ground.

His previous record! The words are the ordinary ending of the children's cases. One learns with a start that the boy of ten, and others like him, have paste—pasts carefully tabulated, which face them at every turn. They cannot escape them, they cannot wipe them out. Ten years old and a court record! What will it be in ten more?—in fifteen, twenty?

The next prisoner was convicted of high balls—not the usual kind, but those that break windows and disturb the nerves of passers by.

The Justice looked a little disappointed when he found that the high ball was of the innocuous type, and remonstrated with his infantile prisoner with the impersonal suggestion that he should have been "fanned with a club" and not have wasted the time of the court.

At this point the genial Judge was called upon to straighten out a tangle in regard to a family tree. Edward, the defendant, testified that, according to his knowledge and belief he was 14. His mother, tearful and black-gowned, testified that, as he was born in 1888, he must be 12. The Judge explained at length to her on this delicate point and Edward was finally recorded as being 15 and was discharged with a mild reprimand, his offence coming under that elastic section 675, which seems to embrace everything that boy ever could, would, should or might think of doing.


HIS TEMPTATION.

The next offence showed where the mystic "Come 7 Come 11" had for once failed in its duty. Charles was up for shooting craps, the common misdemeanor in the Children's Court. A burly officer with cheeks like the apples of Grand Pr , stated that having seen the defendant in this nefarious pursuit, he had immediately gone away, got two other officers and arrested the culprit.

And yet there are those who believe that the New York policemen are neglectful of their duties. Three officers to arrest a small boy of twelve.

Charles, of course, indignantly denied the charge. His reason was perfectly satisfactory. "I couldn't uv been shootin'," he explained, "'cause I didn't have any money."

Then came the question: "If you had had money you would have played craps?"

"Uv course." Such a question seemed to him irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial.

Albert Krauch shuffled into place under the convoy of strong hands. It is noticeable that the old offenders walk right up to the rail, while the green hands have to be shown where to stand or sit, as may be.

"Spell your name." The Justice leans forward.

"A-l-b-e-r-t."

"I think I can spell Albert," remarks the Court grimly. "Have a try at your last name."

Albert's sense of humor is deadened by his surroundings. He does not heed the titter which runs around the room, but makes a try at his last name successfully.

Albert is 10. He has ridden a bicycle without a lamp. His story is so straight—straight as rain. He had his lamp lighted, but all of a sudden it went out, and just at that minute he ran into a policeman, who grabbed him. The policeman's story was a little different. The policeman has a way of telling different stories which must be trying to a Court. The benefit of the doubt was again given to the boy. Then the call for the "Previous Record" was made.

The Previous Record was a long one. It was mostly composed of complaints made by his father, complaints that he was insubordinate, that he kept late hours, that he would not work, &c. It was rather an appalling past for a boy in the grip of justice.

The Judge thought a moment. Then, keenly:

"You have a stepmother?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you had one?"

"Two years."

"I thought so."

Apparently stepmothers on the East Side live up to their traditions.

The trapdoor again opened and another crap shooter was hustled to the front. He stood, a mute picture of misery, wetting his dry lips with his parched tongue, swallowing audibly and twisting his worsted cap. Oh, those twisted caps! Surely the keen observer could be able to tell just how many times a boy had been in the Children's Court by the look of those funny bits of headgear. After a while he told his tale of woe.


THE MOTHER PLEADS.

"I wasn't shootin' craps. I was just wit' de bunch, an' when the officer comes up, he grabs me, jus' 'cause I was lyin' down on the groun' playin' with a big marble and the other fellers had time to get away."

The merciless voice of the Court:

"You mean if you hadn't been flat on the ground the officer couldn't have caught you?"

"Yessir."

The Court—Quite right.

Then the Justice took occasion to inculcate those lessons against the encroachments of the world, the flesh and the devil, which, it is only too apparent, are not learned in their proper place.

"You know that if you shoot craps you are only a common gambler, and if you get to be a common gambler after you are 16 you may be sent away to State's prison?"

The small boy twisted his tongue, his toes and his cap, a tri-union of movement, which is only seen at its best in the Children's Court.

"Yessir."

One questions what the State's prison means to these waifs. Is it a vague, indefinite place, like the sheol of the Sunday school superintendent, which never comes near enough the active life really to influence it? Does it mean a possible harbor of refuge where they may get three meals a day, warm clothes and a roof? Surely as a deterrent of crime it would seem to have failed in its office. As the missionary in Esquimau countries is said to change his description of hell, finding a warm place too attractive, so State's prison will have to mean something besides warmth, food and clothes before it acts as the Court intends it. "Fanning with a club," to use the Judge's classic expression, would seem nearer and more effective as a buffer against punishment.

Perhaps the Judge knows this. He seems to know everything concerning these children who are brought before him; knows at a glance whether they are lying or telling the truth, whether they are to be remonstrated or pleaded with. And so——

"You will be a good boy and not keep bad company, and go to school?"

"Yessir."

Previous record?

"*Merely destitution.*"

A woman visitor in a new spring hat, frilly things about her neck and a big bunch of violets, drops her head while she feels softly for a bit of lace and cambric. Two or three others turn away their heads also, as if ashamed.

No record! Merely destitution. And the waif is dismissed.

John Eliot had exploded one torpedo in the street.

"You are the boy who drops torpedoes off the elevated cars, I presume?" (This from the Justice.)

The defendant indignantly denies the charge. He wouldn't do "such a t'ing, not for nuttin'." He just happened to have the torpedo.


"YOUR TROUBLE IS FAT POCKETBOOKS."

"I know; I know. Previous record?"

One small boy had a revolver concealed about his person. He had just borrowed it to see what it looked like and as the cop came along, he put it in his pocket and then, and then——

"Previous record. The pistol will help toward the Police Pension Fund."

It seems that these articles are sold at auction for that purpose. It is in running this particular form of misdemeanor down that the police are extraordinarily active.

But the interest of the day centres about a gang of burglars. The gang consists of four boys, their ages from 8 to 10, who were arrested after breaking into a three-story and brownstone house. Their booty concealed about them consisted of door keys, while they had confessed to designs against the kitchen range and some gas fixtures, for which they could, at a certain place, get 7 cents a pound.

The plaintiff was a German doctor who owned the property, the kitchen range, the door keys and the gas fixtures. He rolled his r-r-r-r's and wore his hair à la Spring Poet. As he took the chair, wrapped the tails of his frock coat about him, arranged the pink in his hair—no, in his buttonhole—he explained to the ladies in his immediate vicinity that the Captain of the Gang was missing. He had not been arrested.


CASE OF THE AUTOMOBILE RACER.

They were a sorry looking lot, the gang. Nothing of the Jesse James bravado was left. They acknowledged everything and even offered extraneous testimony of their own guilt. They averred, however, that they had not taken the kitchen range. That seemed in their minds to offset their real guilt to a great extent. They huddled together and one or two sobbed mournfully. They were all hungry and tired and awfully sorry. They would have said so if they had dared. Against the stalwart proportions of policeman, the counsel and witnesses, their pitiful proportions stood out in etching like distinctness.

In the near background of the group of spectators huddled about the rail, a woman in shabby clothes murmured inarticulately. "He's a good boy; it's his first time; he was led away." The Led Away sobbed in unison, dropping his weak chin into his scarlet sweater. Damon was the only one who seemed philosophic. His nose was of the aspiring variety and his hopes apparently followed it. The case was pretty strong aginst them, as they were caught red handed.

It was a problem even for the Judge of the Children's Court to find "de gang" innocent in face of their own admissions and that of witnesses, and the Court looked and acted perplexed.

One of the witnesses for the plaintiff was badgered and baited a bit by Judge and counsel. He would introduce irrelevant testimony; he would repeat what he heard and imagined. Finally, he turned at bay, and his voice rang out with startling distinctness, to the counsel for the defendants:

"I don't think you quite understand me. I am trying to save the boys,"—this from a witness for the plaintiff.

All through the court room, there was one of those sudden, indefinable shivers. It was an inaudible gasp. If it could have been voiced, it would have said:

"Trying to save the boys! Can't you see, don't you know that that is what we are all trying to do?"

That is the keynote of the Children's Court. There is none of the atmosphere which prevails in other judicial sessions. There is nothing of the impersonal, nothing of the unprejudiced, of the unfeeling, emotionless Judge, counsel, witnesses for and against, are banded together in one ambition—to save the boys.

The law may be a Juggernaut in some places; it may crash on over the victims. But not here. Here it is rendered as innocuous as possible. Here it is strained to the snapping point. Here the benefit of the doubt is never allowed to die through inanition.

Said the woman to the Princess, in "No. 5 John street": "It is too late to save us; you can only help the children."

Yet with all the kindness shown here, to the uninitiated the process of bringing these waifs to the bar of justice seems too much like breaking a butterfly on the wheel. Perhaps it is the best way yet devised. It must be, for it is one of the hardest problems of municipal life.

But that a child who has thrown a torpedo, ridden a bicycle without a lamp, played craps for brown pennies, should be made so familiar with the routine of the law, with the gown and rail that he early loses his mysterious awe; that he should be hampered with a Record before he has made his start in life, that he comes to feel himself, in those young gropings of the juvenile mind, a criminal, an outcast—such a state of affairs must offset to a great extent the unending kindness of those who are there in the Children's Court, "to save the boys."

THEY HUNT STONE AGE RELICS.

AN OUTDOOR DIVERSION TO BE ENJOYED JUST NOW.

Enthusiasts Searching the Ploughed Fields Where Once Aborigines Lived, Hunted or Fought — Other Things Found Besides Prehistoric Articles.

Systematic hunting for relics of the Stone Age is an interesting pursuit if one has enthusiasm, endurance and good eyesight. If the searcher has good eyes to start with, the faculty of seeing the difference between a clay-encrusted stone and an arrow point will soon grow from practice and the eyes will be trained to see things which the ploughboy would tread upon or pass by.

This is the season for finding things abroad in the land—things which were dropped centuries ago by those who roamed the earth and got a living entirely from nature and in the most primitive way. The farmer is turning over the loam with his nineteenth or twentieth century plough and unearthing agricultural tools and implements of the chase dropped and buried perhaps thousands of years before people knew how to count centuries.

In following the plough the farmer seldom sees the things he turns up. His eyes are upon the work ahead and his mind is upon getting over with it as soon as possible.

It would be little use for a a relic hunter to follow the plough immediately, because the stones need washing before those which have been fashioned by human hands disclose their forms to the trained eyes of the searcher. The first spring rain following the ploughing is the signal for the relic hunter to go out and tread the furrows with his head bowed and his eyes roving over every foot of the upturned soil.

It is harder upon the cords of the neck than it is upon the eyes and the going is rather trying to one who is used to treading level walks, but it is wholesome exercise in the open air with a diverting object in view.

The relic hunter needs shoes with good thick soles and broad heels to tramp the irregular and soft earth of the ploughed fields, and it confines one to the goose-step to keep in the furrows. A jacket with big and strong pockets, or a capacious trout creel slung from the shoulder and strapped to the waist are needed accessories of a relic-hunting trip, and a stiff brush should be carried to remove the loose clay or loam from the finds.

The most essential thing is to find a place where the aborigines camped or hunted. Valley farms are almost invariably the most productive of stone relics and it does not matter much where the searcher goes if he or she can find newly ploughed ground.

There are fruitful acres within fifteen miles of this city for the relic hunter and now is the time for the quest. The valley of the Passaic in Essex and Morris counties discloses thousands of stone implements every year. There is good hunting at Chatham, Madison, Hanover, Pine Brook and in the neighborhood of Caldwell, as well as southward in the valley between the first and second mountains of the Watchung range and along the Passaic and Delaware division of the Lackawanna railroad, between Long Hill and Springfield Mountain.

All of northern New Jersey must have been a sort of happy hunting ground for the inhabitants who used stone implements, or else a great battleground where an immense quantity of primitive ammunition was expended in tribal warfare. Year after year spearheads, battle axes and arrow points are exposed to the light by the farmers tilling the soil and here and there are seen indications of the abiding place of a prehistoric armorer.

These signs are collections of flakes and chippings of stone and imperfect arrow points broken in process of manufacture. They are usually found on the shore of a natural lake such as Greedpond or Swartzwood, upon the bars and reefs of such enlarged lakes as Hopatcong or Greenwood Lake when the water is drawn down, or in the beds of extinct lakes where the plough turns up the rich soil.

Many of the implements are chipped from stone of a character which does not exist in New Jersey at the present time. Arrow points of true flint have occasionally been found, but most of the specimens are of hornblende, blue limestone, milky quartz from veins in the trap rock and from the flaky slate of the western counties of the State.

Two relic hunters who have been following up the diversion for a couple of years and have accumulated fine collections are Stephen Van Rensselaer of Orange and Edward Duffy, a Newark broker with a taste for field sports and scientific investigation. They have been out in the Passaic Valley three times this spring in the neighborhood of Caldwell and Pine Brook.

Mr. Van Rensselaer rides a horse to the hunting grounds and Mr. Duffy goes out in a runabout. The former wears cavalry boots and Mr. Duffy wears a shooting suit and high-laced hunting shoes. Mr. Van Rensselaer makes two or three finds to Mr. Duffy's one. Mr. Duffy, however, does not appear to get much the worse of the game. He finds not only bric-à-brac of the Stone Age but valuable things of a more recent epoch.

Since he took up the diversion last spring he has found two old bull's eye watches, both cased in gold, and a number of coins. One of the latter is a rare New Jersey copper of 1786, with the horse head over the plough. It is in good a state of preservation and is worth $20. One of the watches is probably 150 years old and the other is of more recent make, but is heavy and beautifully engraved and chased.

Last week Mr. Duffy found a prize in the form of a stone hoe, four inches wide and five inches in depth. He picked up, also, a perfect stone pipe, thirty-two arrow points, a broken spearhead and a stone bowl, or mortar, ten inches in diameter. He regards the pipe and the mortar as the best finds he has ever made.

MAN OUT OF PLACE.

An Incident to Show That He Has No Right to Buy Artificial Flowers.

It is one of the inconsistencies of things that a man should look so much in his element when buying flowers in a florist's shop and so out of his element when shopping at the artificial flower counter.

"I wish to get a rose," a man of pale clerical look said to the flower seller in a great store.

"Single or double rose?" the girl inquired. Then, as he hesitated, "A bud or full bloom?"

"I don't know," he said, doubtfully, tugging at his mustache, and the girl put before him a medium-sized straw-colored rose, well placed on a green spray.

"Something larger," he said, decidedly.

The girl dodged down and brought from under the counter a full-petalled rose a size bigger, and her neighbor, who was unoccupied, fetched a monster white rose, fully a hand's width across, for inspection.

The man still looked unsatisfied. His eyes roved over the boxes back of them.

"Haven't you something—er—more rosy?" he asked.

"A blush rose?" the girl suggested.

"A tea rose, perhaps?" her neighbor put in as the customer looked dissent. "A General Jack, American Beauty," putting forward specimens of each class.

But the rose buyer shook his head.

"None of those names sounds like it," he explained. "I expect it's not one big rose I want, but several tacked to one stem." And he walked further on up the aisle eying the array of blossoms in bunches and garlands.

"This kind," he said at length, pausing before some big-faced scarlet beauties grouped in a mass.

"Those are poppies," the girl said. "You asked for roses."

"Well, no matter," he answered. "But these are what I want, and I'll thank you to put me up three bunches."

"Three bunches?" the girl asked, turning the flowers broadside so that he could see the size.

"Yes, they'll fade, likely, and new ones will be needed now and then, so I might as well get a plenty while I'm about it."

The man was stout and wore an overcoat of considerable weight, and perhaps that was why he took out his handkerchief just then and mopped his forehead.

"You think they're for his wife or his daughter?" one salesgirl said to the other when he moved away.

"They're enough for the whole family," was the reply.

"But ain't he a dandy shopper! He wanted 'em—er—rosier."

And she mimicked the customer's manner and tone as he had debated about his purchase.